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SILHOUETTES CUT BY M. HERBER AND LADY HAMILTON, 1777. FORMERLY OWNED BY SIR HORACE WALPOLE

ART IN BLACK AND WHITE

AS SHOWN IN THE RECENT EXHIBITION OF OLD AND MODERN
HANDICRAFT IN BALTIMORE, MD.

BY EMILY E. GRAVES

Secretary of the Handicraft Club of Baltimore

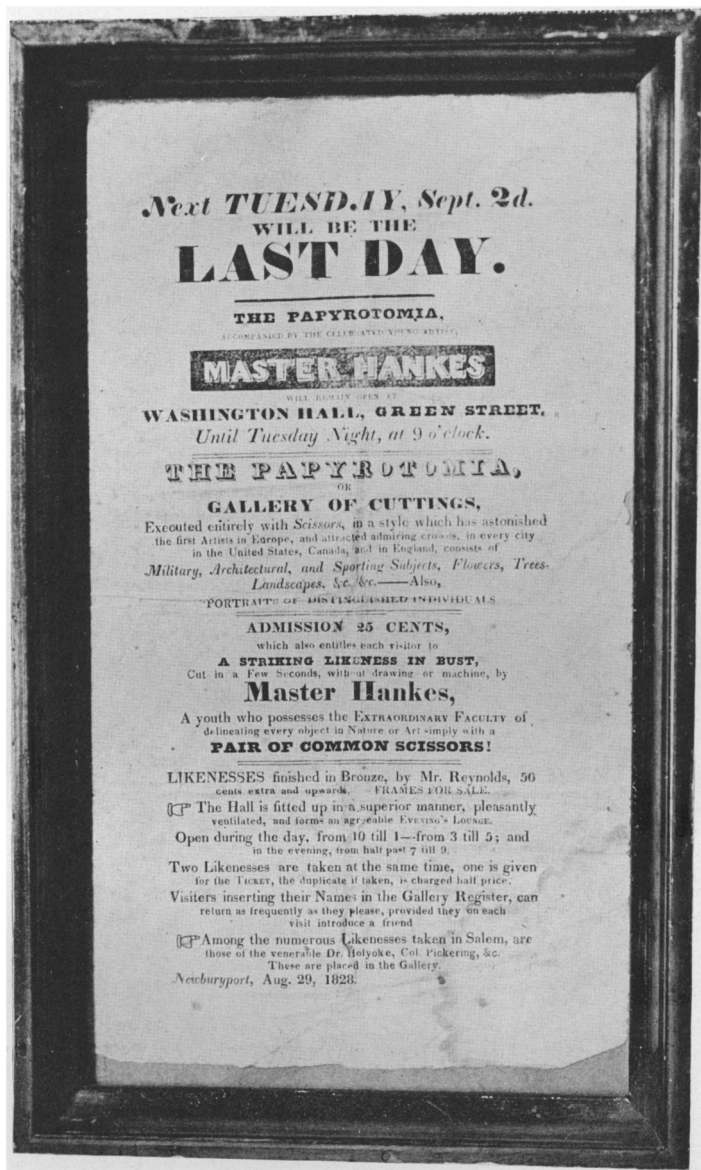
"AT its best," writes E. Neville Jackson in "The History of silhouettes," "black profile portraiture is a thing of real beauty, almost worthy to take its place with the best miniature painting; at the least, it is a quaintly appealing handicraft, revealing the fashions and foibles, the intimate domestic life of its day." The silhouette was the pioneer of cheap portraiture. Indeed, the word "silhouette" may be said to be a synonym for economy, being derived from the name of that reforming treasurer of Louis XV, Etienne de Silhouette (said, by the way, to have been an amateur of the art), who so endeavored to curb the extravagances of the court, that the wits of the time gave his name to whatever was cheap.

Nevertheless, the silhouette had a most honorable ancestry, the very earliest representations of the human figure being shown in profile. The eighteenth century development of shadow portraiture is said to have been part of the classic revival, a distant following of Greek vase decoration.

There were several methods of making

silhouettes, and all, apparently, were used at the same time. There was no orderly growth of a school. Mrs. Pybus, the first known English silhouettist, who cut the portraits of King William and Queen Mary in 1699, and August Edouart, who died in the mid-nineteenth century, both used the scissors or knife. Very early there were mechanical aids for getting accurate likenesses. They needed skillful manipulation, and those who used them were not necessarily fakers. Some silhouettes were simply miniatures painted in black, often lined with gold or color. A rare type was painted on convex glass, so that the actual shadow was thrown on the white backing. But certainly the most interesting were those made with knife or scissors, and of incredible nimbleness must have been the fingers that could cut such intricate designs and characteristic portraits.

There was recently shown in Baltimore, at the Second Biennial Exhibition of Old and Modern Handicraft, under the auspices of the Handicraft Club of Baltimore, a collection representing all types of sil-



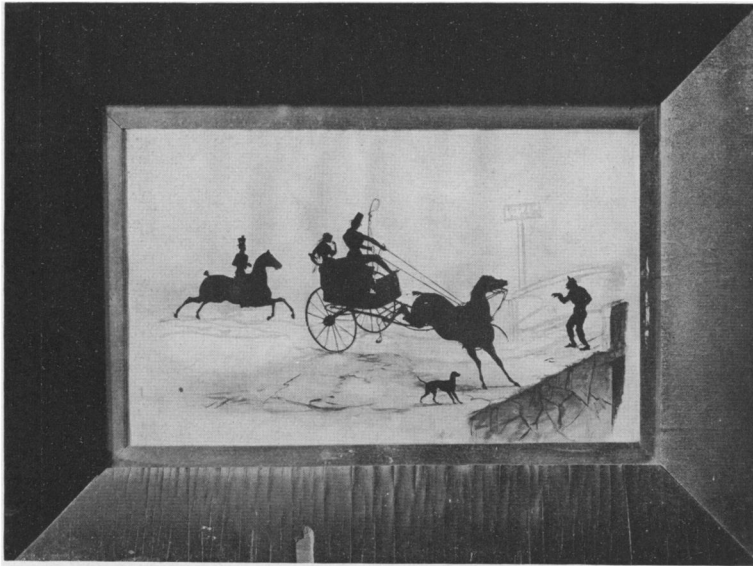
MASTER HANKES' POSTER

houettes loaned by individual owners and collectors in Baltimore. The oldest, and perhaps the quaintest exhibited were the delightful groups cut by Monsieur Herber of Geneva, and those (in the same frame) "in the manner of M. Herber," by Lady Hamilton, wife of Sir William Hamilton, Minister to Naples in 1777. These were formerly owned by Sir Horace Walpole.

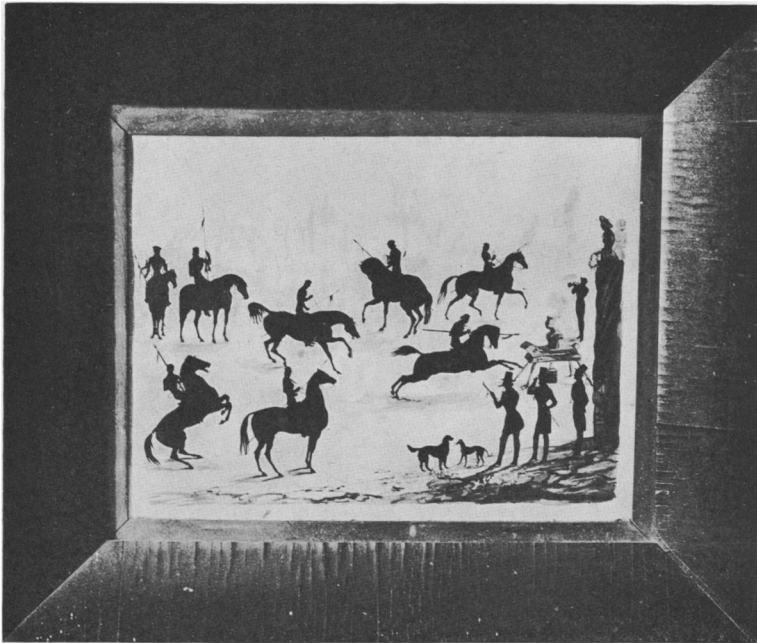
There were several charming painted

silhouettes by Miers, of the famous London firm of Miers & Field. Master Hubard was represented, the youthful prodigy, who began his career at the age of thirteen, and toured America when seventeen. The Peales were especially charming. But most interesting, though latest in date, was the large collection of silhouettes by August Edouart.

Edouart was a Frenchman (b. 1789, d.



"TWO AND A HALF MILES TO BALTIMORE"



"TOURNAMENT AT HAMPTON"

1861), who migrated to England, and there and in America most of his work was done. He possessed an extraordinary faculty for catching not only the likeness but the personality of his sitters, and, perhaps unconsciously, the very flavor of the

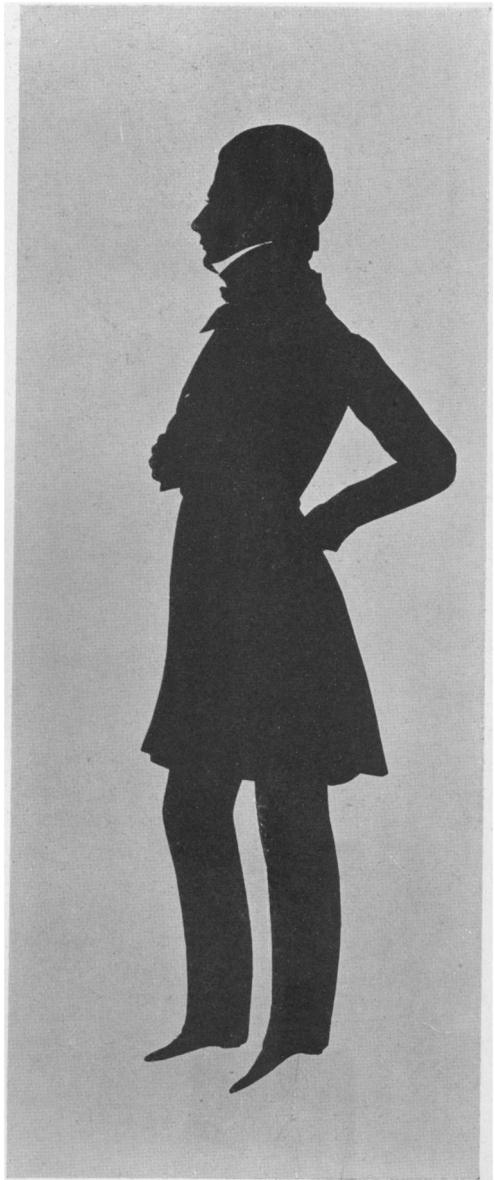
period in which they lived. The family groups were specially typical. Edouart is said to have made more than 100,000 silhouettes, and in his tours of America made portraits of almost all the prominent men in the country. He made always

two silhouettes at a time, cutting freehand, with folded paper. One cutting was mounted with a sketched-in background, for the sitter, and the other put in an album and marked with name and date as a record for his own use. Edouart valued these albums of duplicates above all things, and his heart is said to have been broken when in 1849 he was shipwrecked on the Irish coast, barely escaping with his own life, and losing all but nine of his books. It is interesting that some of these duplicates found their way back to America, and a number of them—easily identified by their new white mounts—were shown in the Baltimore Exhibition. In at least one case the silhouette had come, after many years, into the possession of a descendant of the original of the portrait.

Two most delightful pictures, painted in shadow with india ink, were made in Baltimore, and commemorate a tournament held at Doughoregan Manor, the famous estate of the Carroll family, a few miles from the city. This tournament is celebrated in the history of local sport, and is described fully in Warfield's "Founders of Anne Arundell and Howard Counties," even to the figure on the pedestal. One picture shows the tournament itself, with knights in vigorous action; the other, the return home, a very spirited composition, in which the lady evidently just crowned "Queen of Love and Beauty" is seen, seemingly in a very precarious situation, as she clings to the side of the cart. A sign-post points the way: "two and a half miles to Baltimore!"

Besides the silhouettes in black and white, profile portraiture was represented by a group of wax portraits, some exquisite Wedgwood medallions, and three charming water colors by St. Memin, very rare examples of his art.

This collection was shown in connection with an exhibition of Modern Handicraft, which filled an adjoining Gallery, and it is especially interesting that there were also in the modern collection several examples of art in black and white. The Batik hangings from the Myer Studios, New York, reached a much higher level of artistic expression than was, indeed, even attempted in the older work shown.



GEORGE B. COALE, CUT BY AUGUST EDOUART, ONE OF DUPLICATES
RESCUED FROM SHIPWRECK

There was evident a suggestion of Greek vase decoration in the balance and rhythm of the "Scherzo," designed by Bertram Hartman, and the "Nubian Dancers" from the design of Robert Edwards, but in their live joy and movement they were at once wholly modern and rarely beautiful. Never, since the days of the Greeks has the shadow been so effectively used in art.